

of section 18 of the United States Code 2257 pertaining to films and certain other media with sexually explicit conduct.

My legislation enjoys the support of a broad alliance of groups affected by the loss of U.S. production, including the following: national, State, and local film commissions, under the umbrella organization Film US as well as the Entertainment Industry Development Corporation; film and television producers, Academy of Television Arts and Sciences, the Association of Independent Commercial Producers, the American Film Marketing Association and the Producers Guild; organizations representing small businesses, such as the postproduction facilities, the Southern California Chapter of the Association of Imaging Technology and Sound; equipment rental companies, Production Equipment Rental Association; and organizations representing the creative participants in the entertainment industry, the Directors Guild of America, the Screen Actors Guild, and the Recording Musicians Association.

All of these are great Americans who want to keep their work in our country, but if it is cost prohibitive, if the objectives and the incentives that are provided by these other nations are given to this industry that we do not provide, what other choices are they given other than to take those jobs, to take those wages, out of our country and take them somewhere else?

In addition, the U.S. Conference of Mayors formally adopted the Runaway Film Production Resolution at their annual conference in June.

Leveling the playing field through targeted tax incentives will keep film production, and the jobs and revenues it generates, in the United States.

I urge all of my colleagues, as we talk about trade, as we talk about being a part of this global economy, as we talk about creating the jobs we want, that we have, and we would like to keep in the United States, to join me in supporting this bill in order to prevent the further deterioration of one of America's most important industries, and the thousands of jobs and businesses that depend on it.

Think of what it could do for small towns, for the main streets of America, to have a film produced there. They would not only have the cultural advantage, the economic advantage but the sense of pride and joy in being able to keep this industry in our country and doing what everybody can be most proud of, and that is sharing our home States and all of the many things we are all proud of in our home States in the production of American films.

PRESCRIPTION DRUGS

Mrs. LINCOLN. Madam President, as in morning business, I will talk a little bit about an issue that I think is probably the most paramount issue in the State of Arkansas and also probably

the most paramount issue across this great Nation, and that is the issue of the Medicare coverage of prescription drugs for our elderly. We have debated this issue for quite some time. I advocated that Congress add a universal voluntary prescription drug benefit to Medicare when I first started campaigning for the Senate in 1998. Five years later, we still have not passed a plan. We have to begin moving forward on this initiative, as I look across the great State of Arkansas and recognize the number of elderly in my State who would benefit from such a plan.

More importantly, we also have to look at how we as a government, in the economics of today, would benefit from a prescription drug plan for our elderly. If we do not want to do it for the quality of life for our elderly relatives, our grandparents, our parents, and all of those we love and adore, we should at least want to do it for the economics of this country because we know, without a doubt, particularly in rural America, that in providing a prescription drug package we are going to save dollars down the road because we prevent those elderly, when they are on a prescription drug, from having to have the more costly acute hospitalization or nursing care, or perhaps some of the more expensive home health care which they might need if we can simply keep them on a prescription drug plan that they so drastically need.

Both structure and costs of the benefit have been the main issues holding us up, but we have to move beyond those difficulties and those problems that we have in structuring cost.

I think back to last summer and some of the other members of the Senate Finance Committee with whom I was working. We were moving forward on coming together with a good compromise and working through the details of what we could see as being a beneficial plan for everyone in this country. Then, unfortunately, the events of 9-11 occurred. We, in the Congress, obviously, have had a great deal to deal with since then. We have talked about homeland security, our airport security, our national security, and the foreign affairs that come along with all of the issues we have dealt with since 9-11.

I do sincerely believe that now is the time we must remember what are the most important issues with which we have to deal on the homefront, particularly before we conclude this Congress. We must begin now with a prescription drug package if we clearly intend to come up with something by the end of this session, and I think we must look earnestly, not only at what we can afford but, more importantly, how we can get the biggest bang for that buck and how we can be assured that the majority of the elderly, particularly those who are in the greatest need, will receive a benefit package. Seniors need this now more than ever. We have to enact that benefit which is adequately funded and guaranteed to be universal, affordable, and accessible.

We have looked at some of the plans that have come out recently, and, unfortunately, they do fall very far short of what our seniors need. Much of the money has gone into some of the private areas that actually present me with great concern. Medicare+Choice, for instance, the last three Medicare+Choice plans in Arkansas were pulled out the end of December of last year. Not a single one of those three plans offered a prescription drug package. Medigap in Arkansas is disproportionately higher in cost than it is nationwide. So it does not provide the service, it does not provide the safety net, it does not provide the benefits that Arkansans need, and it comes at an exceptionally high price.

We have to look at putting competition in, but we have to make sure it is a benefit package that is going to work for all areas of this great country. We want to continue to work on this. Rural beneficiaries in my State are more likely to have poor health and lower incomes than seniors living in urban areas. They also use more prescription drugs.

That is one of the reasons I am here today. This is an extremely powerful issue in America and across rural America. We are only as strong as our weakest link. If rural America happens to be that weak link now, we must address those problems. Putting a plan into place that only gets at the problems of the urban areas or the highly populated areas is not going to work because it will continue draining the overall system in rural areas.

In Arkansas, 60 percent of seniors live in rural areas. I am extremely concerned about the limited prescription drug coverage available to them. Only 14 percent of Arkansas employers offer retiree health insurance. Only 2 percent of rural Arkansans are enrolled in managed care, which goes to show one size does not fit all. We have to come up with a comprehensive plan that has enough flexibility that we can make it fit all regions of this great Nation, but that we can do so in a way that is cost effective and cost efficient.

Medicare+Choice plans do not work in our rural States anymore, and Medigap coverage is out of reach for most seniors.

This is an essential issue with which we have to deal. We must come together. We must come up with a compromise. We must come up with a sound policy that will not only provide the quality of life we want for our loved ones but also a huge part of stabilizing our economy in this great country in a time when health care has blown completely out of proportion.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I ask unanimous consent to be recognized in morning business.

Mr. REID. If my friend from Florida would withhold for a minute, we are near the time where the majority leader will come to the floor. It should be

another 10 minutes. Is that adequate time for the Senator?

I ask unanimous consent the Senator from Florida be recognized for up to 10 minutes to speak as in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I compliment the Senator from Arkansas for her excellent statement about health care. As the Senator pointed out the need for a prescription drug benefit to modernize Medicare, it reminded me of an unbelievable story. I don't know that it is fact, but it sounded pretty solid.

The White House is floating a plan that someone on home health care would have to have a copay through Medicare in order to get that service. Certainly in our part of the country, home health care is an alternative to the more expensive care of a nursing home, and clearly it is a lot more expensive being in a hospital. And home health care, despite the expense, is clearly a lot better quality of life for the senior citizen than being in a nursing home or in a hospital if they can be medically treated appropriately and successfully in home health care.

The Senator talked so eloquently about medical care in the State of Arkansas. Would it not be devastating to senior citizens to have a copay on home health care that they now do not have under Medicare?

Mrs. LINCOLN. In some areas, it has gotten difficult even finding home health care that will serve rural areas. Certainly for myself, with aging parents who are at home and independent, home health care is essential.

If the question is whether or not they will serve and whether or not those individuals can afford or are able to provide a copay, it will be devastating.

In my home State of Arkansas, 49 percent of the people have an adjusted gross income of \$20,000 or less. We are a snapshot of what the rest of the Nation is going to be like. Florida has a lot of retirees and elderly, but for us as a percentage of our population, we rank in the top three. We are clearly a snapshot of where the rest of the country is going to be in terms of the percentage of our elderly population and the lack of services. Because we are rural, we have that lack of services.

Even the urban areas will be without the services if we do not look at Medicare reform and we do not start now looking at the ways we can make health care delivery more affordable. Prescription drugs is the most reasonable place to start. We have the technology, we have the development of pharmaceuticals that can help provide that quality of life, and we have home health care out there that can help keep down the costs of acute hospitalization, acute care in nursing homes, and other areas.

Making it cost prohibitive does not increase the availability or the accessibility of health care. We can keep our

loved ones in their homes and cared for at a reasonable cost, the Senator is exactly right.

It is so important to recognize we need to start now. We are so underprepared as a nation as to what will happen in the next 15 to 20 years when the baby boomers hit 65 and we have no geriatricians, no physicians, and a nursing shortage. The State of Massachusetts lost 25 or 26 nursing homes last year, all of which were 85 percent or better occupied.

We are not preparing ourselves for what will happen with our population, which is going to increase phenomenally in the aged category. Home health care and providing it in a way that is cost effective is absolutely essential. The Senator from Florida knows, and I am with him without a doubt, we have to make sure we focus on this issue. We need to do it sooner rather than later.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. It is amazing to me where they come up with the ideas from the administration to get savings out of Medicare, particularly when they start talking about making senior citizens pay copays on home health care, which is an activity that is desirable and saves money in the long run by giving seniors an alternative to the hospital and nursing homes that are so much more expensive.

COMMANDER SCOTT SPEICHER

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Madam President, I rise to address a subject that is heavy on my heart. It goes back to 1991. The first American shot down and declared dead in the gulf war was Commander Scott Speicher of the U.S. Navy from Jacksonville, FL. He was pronounced by the Department of Defense, indeed, the then-Secretary of Defense, as having been killed in action.

We have learned over the intervening 11 years, the evidence strongly suggests Commander Speicher survived being shot down. That credible intelligence report indicates that someone who drove him from the crash site to the hospital has stepped forward as an eyewitness. For 11 years, his family in Jacksonville have pondered the question, Is he alive?

This is truly a gripping human drama. But it is just that more gripping because the U.S. military has a creed among pilots that when you have to punch out, you are going to have a rescue team that will come get you. Against all odds, they will come, try to find you, and get you out alive.

This awful question hangs over the CDR Scott Speicher case that we abandoned him.

So 11 years later, what we need to do is to use every avenue to try to find out, is he alive? Is he in Iraq? If he is, we need to get him out. If he is not, we need to find out the specific circumstances that led to his death after his apparent surviving being shot down in the Iraqi desert.

A couple of our Senators have been involved in this case: Senator BOB SMITH of New Hampshire and Senator PAT ROBERTS of Kansas. There is a Kansas connection with Commander Speicher. I kind of backed into this situation recently when I saw an opening, and I took it.

I was in Damascus, Syria, and spoke to some of our Embassy staff. Did they have any information? They had inquired of the Syrian Government a year ago and had no reply. So later that day, I found myself with Senator SHELBY and Congressman CRAMER in a 2-hour meeting with the Syrian President, President Assad, the son of the long-time Syrian President who had died a couple of years ago and has been succeeded by his son. I saw the opening, and I took it.

I asked the Syrian President if he would use his good offices and task his intelligence apparatus to see what they could find out from Iraq and their contacts with Iraqi intelligence activities.

Madam President, I ask unanimous consent I be allowed to continue until such time as the majority leader arrives.

Mr. REID. Why don't we do it for a time certain because he may never arrive.

Mr. NELSON of Florida. Five minutes?

Mr. REID. How about 5 o'clock?

Mr. NELSON of Florida. I thank the Senator from Nevada, our wonderful assistant majority leader.

This is a very important case that I wanted to explain to the Senate.

We were sitting there with the young President, with whom we have significant differences of opinion in the Middle Eastern crisis. We talked to him about Hezbollah and suggested he should pull off his support of that terrorist activity. We thanked him for his help with regard to our going after al-Qaida—and they have been helpful. We thanked him for his support, protecting our United States interests in Syria, particularly our Embassy that has no setback from the street in Damascus. At the time we were there, there was a 100,000-person demonstration. Of course, they had the riot police lined up shoulder to shoulder to protect our Ambassador's residence as well as the Embassy.

But I saw the opening. I asked him, and he said he would.

Later on, as a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, suddenly I found myself face to face, right over here in our Foreign Relations Committee room in the Capitol, with the Prime Minister of Lebanon. I told him the story. I told him the gripping story of a family; the children want to know, is their daddy alive? And the Prime Minister of Lebanon, Rafic Hariri, said he, too, would see through his good offices and his intelligence apparatus if they could find out any information.

I have spoken to Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Myers,